

Answers to The Atheist Experience, 1 (episode 26.08)

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But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always
to give an answer to every man that asketh you
a reason of the hope that is in you
with meekness and fear:
— 1 Peter 3:15

Abstract

This paper is my first reply to my readership concerning the *The Atheist Experience* YouTube channel. I hope to do many more. I will probably be reviewing their episodes in random order, leaving comments only to those episodes I consider to be most important. I will include in my comments the names of the hosts for each episode.

1 Introducing Me: Patrick

What I am: I am a Christian, but definitely not an evangelical, Catholic, Protestant, or a member of any other generally recognized variant of Christianity. I consider myself a charismatic, in that I believe that the gifts of the Spirit are still in operation and will be until the Church Age comes to an end when Jesus returns. I consider myself a Christian speculative fiction writer,¹ and I do almost all of my preaching through the characters I've invented in that venue. That makes me an amateur preacher, not a real one.

What I am not: I am not a Christian apologist; at the very least, I don't consider myself to be one. I don't apologize for God because everything God does is pure, and good, and righteous — though, sure enough, humans won't always think so. I admit that I don't always like what God does, but He's God and He can do whatever He wants. I am also not a debater. I think that debates are not a fair forum to present either side of the issues. I leave debates and arguments to my fictional characters to deal with.

¹My fiction stories of Ilfinor and Tristan are available for free on this website.

Although I personally like philosophy, I am not one who likes to make **complex** philosophical arguments for the existence of God, or for any other aspect of God. So, one of the reasons I prefer not to think of myself as an apologist for Christianity is because there is a thousand-year history of Christian apologists who make complex philosophical arguments for the Christian God. I think that the best reason that I don't consider myself an apologist is that I don't believe that one can argue a person into the Kingdom of God. But for those who think they can, more power to you.

Unless I state otherwise, my biblical quotes are from the King James Version of the Bible.

In this essay, I will reply to Episode 26.08 (Feb. 23, 2022) of *The Atheist Experience*. The hosts for this episode are Jim Barrows and Matt Dillahunt. By the way, I am likely to find grounds to argue against the caller as well as the hosts.

2 The caller is Jon, who talks about objective morality and why our society needs God to be the source of it

Disclaimer: I have tried to accurately quote all the people speaking, but often the words did not come out clearly to me, or I left out some words that were either repetitive, indistinct, or did not make a complete sentence.

Caller (Jon): I want to make the case that we need God for our moral guidance.

Matt: Okay. Go for it.

Jon: Well you see, without God or any kind of religion. You see, with God you have a standard of right or wrong, Something objective to tell you what's right and wrong. But if you remove that, it's based on our feelings, individuals. And here's the result that we see: Racism abounds. People are deciding what gender they are. People are being treated unfairly. And our freedoms are being taken away by both the Biden administration and the ????? administration. We're in a state of chaos. Do you agree, gentlemen?

Matt: No, not in the slightest. Here's the thing. What makes you think that if there's a God, that gives an objective standard of right and wrong? Because, isn't it just because of what God says is right and wrong? That would make it subjective, because God's a thinking agent in your view, right?

Jon: He is a thinking agent but He knows more than we do. . .

Matt: No, no, no, no, no! The fact that someone knows more doesn't make something objective. It still means it's subjective. So, your potential solution just takes it away from being subjective with us as the foundation to subjective with somebody else as the foundation.

Jon: I hear that.

Matt: Okay.

Jon: But do you agree that things are falling apart?

Matt: Now, now, hang on. You also suggest that without God you get racism. But, which God are you talking about? Are you talking about the God of the Bible?

Jon: Yes. I'm talking about the Christian God.

Matt: The God of the Bible who had the Jews as His favorite people? And there were different rules for how you treated Jews than there were for how you treated other people? Isn't that racism?

Jon: Where exactly did that happen, sir?

Matt: Where exactly did that happen? In the Bible, in Exodus 21, when the rules for slavery come in. Where you have a different set of rules for Hebrew slaves than you do for non-Hebrew slaves. And at every other point at which God talks about how the Israelites are His chosen people—Let My people go—how they are the preferred ones. And then Jesus later on comes to talk about is here to speak to the lost sheep of the house of Israel or to others. Um, you don't seem to know the Bible, if you don't think that God in the Bible favors the Hebrews. So, how is that not racism? **Jon:** Well, I'm not talking about the Bible, sir. I'm talking about what's happening right now, because right now — [cut off]

Matt: No, sir! No, sir! I asked you which God we were talking about, and you said it was the God of the Bible, didn't you?

Jon: I'm not talking about that. I'm talking — [cut off]

Matt: Okay! No! But you're not talking about it as a matter of convenience, so that you can ignore the difficulties in what you don't understand. So you say that without God — the God of the Bible — is a racist, we end up with racism. Well, I would say that with humanism, where we consider the entirety of humanity as our foundational block that we're considering, that is a much better way to potentially end racism, although, I'm not say you're going to wave a magic wand and racism will go away. But that, to me, would seem to be a better way to end racism than to have a God who prefers one group of people over another, wouldn't you think?

Jon: Explain to me how that would be. Give me an example.

Matt: If you have a God who's in charge of morality or a perspective of God that's in charge of morality and it favors one ethnic group over another, contrast that with humanism as a foundation, which does not favor one ethnic group over another. Isn't the latter less likely to result in racism?

Jon: I suppose so.

Matt: Okay.

Patrick: I cut off this 'debate' at this point. Matt continued with the issue of 'gender choosing', that Jon had brought up. However, this essay is long enough, so I won't also include within it the gender-bender issues. It's now *my* turn to comment on both of these arguers and their arguments.

3 My Commentary

Honor dies where interest lies. — Kwai Chang Caine
(*Kung Fu*, “Arrogant Dragon”)

My comments to Jon’s assertions

From his defense of the Bible, Jon sounds to me like a Christian. But what is the job of a Christian? It is to love God and love one’s neighbor, but that does not include to moralize our neighbor by taking over governments to institute ‘Christian’ laws or to promote Dominionism or ‘Christian values’, per se. I agree with Jon that things are getting worse and worse, as was foretold: perilous times are upon us (2 Timothy 3:1-7). But the solution isn’t Dominionism or Moralism. To the Christian there is no political/social solution, because Jesus never preached that. What He did preach is that the job of the Christian is to do whatever we as individuals can to make this world a little bit better for the poor and the needy and the stranger (refugee), the widow, and the orphan [James 1:27] to the degree that we as individuals can. And if we do that, we ought not to despair. Despairing is dangerous. It undermines the good that we accomplish and it destabilizes a sound mind.

The sole job of the Christian is to obey God while we live in this world, even if we are the last persons on earth to do so. And that state of affairs, Jon, might be really lonely for the believer. It’s not my job to despair for the lack of morality in the world.

We can curse the darkness, Jon, or light a candle. It’s not about what other people do; it’s what you do as an individual that God cares about. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples at the Sea of Galilee (Tiberias) to have a meal with them and to leave them some final orders. In particular Jesus predicted the fate of Peter to his face. Peter responded by looking at John and asking Jesus, ‘What about him?’ To which Jesus replied,

... If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.
— John 21:22

The reason that verse is in there is because it is Jesus’s command to all true disciples: We are to follow Jesus to the best of our abilities, no matter what joys or pains befall ourselves or others. It’s just between the individual believer and Jesus.

In the end, governments do indeed legislate morality — they have to. But they can legislate it too much or too little for the good of society. It’s the job of government to find that sweet spot between the extremes that is good for both society and for the individual.

How is the Christian to know right from wrong?

1. We have the moral principles set down in the Bible, especially in the New Testament.
2. We have our consciences, informed by the Word of God.
3. We have the direct intervention in our lives by God through His voice, through the intervention by angels, or by special circumstances.
4. When things get really confusing, we have our rational minds to use in cases of applying a situation ethic.

My comments on Matt's assertions

Matt gave us three big assertions:

1. God is a racist.
2. Morality is subjective: Not even God can be a source of objective morality.
3. Humanism, not biblical morality, is the better way to eliminate racism from the world.

Matt's basic arguing points about racism were 1) that God demonstrated Himself to be a racist at the time of Moses and under the Old Covenant times, and 2) then also right through with Jesus in the New Covenant times to today.

My reply to that is in two parts: First, I intend to show that God has never been and is not now a 'racist' in the sense that Matt has described, i.e., that God 'favored' the Jews is proof of racism. Second, that, in spite of the fact that Jesus said that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that that does not indicate any form of racism. Third, let's say—for the sake of argument—that Jesus was a 'racist'; the obvious problem with that claim is its total irrelevance to Jon's claim. Jon claimed (by inference) that it is the religion of Christianity that teaches that it is immoral to be racist, and that is the second point Jon made that I actually agree with. Christianity is absolutely antiracism, and no living racist will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!

Point 1: The God of the Old Testament was not racist by any normal definition of the term. First, who are the Jews? The Jews are the children of Israel. Did God 'favor' them? Well, is there any sense in which one could say that God 'favored' the Jews? Yes, indeed. He told them that He would prosper them if they would obey Him. Unfortunately, the Jews seemed to interpret that promise as an entitlement, which it was not. In the Old Testament times God was often very hard on the Jews. Even before they entered the promised Land, the Jews complained against the meals-ready-to-eat that God had provided for them, and God got very pissed at them! In His anger, He literally burned to death hundreds or thousands of them as a punishment, or found some other way to punish them. [Numbers 11:1, Numbers 11:4, Numbers 14:1–4, Numbers 16:3, Number 21:6] The entire Old Testament is a history of God punishing His 'favored' people for their continued disobedience.

I really don't think that God was burning up the Mayans if they complained about what they had for lunch. Same goes for the Chinese and the Native Americans at the same time in history. Jesus explained the philosophy of this behavior on the part of God:

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. **For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:** and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. — Luke 12:47–48

And this form of expectancy is not just for the Jews of Olden Days, but also for the true believers of today. Therefore, I advise that all those true Christians out there settle up with Jesus as soon as possible and to stay current, so that when He comes for you, you can expect to hear, “Well done thou good and faithful servant.” [Matthew 25:21] So, is this what Matt meant by the Jews being God's ‘favorite’ people?

The very Laws God gave to Moses for the Jews were incredibly harsh to them. For instance, anyone who condemned a parent was to be killed. [Exodus 21:15,17]

And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. . . . And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

One thing is clear about being among the ‘favored’ of God: it wasn't easy.

Now, God had to at least tolerate the Children of Israel even when they were grossly disobedient to Him, if for no other reason than for His promise to bring forth Messiah from out of their midst. One such prophesy was Isaiah 53:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. — Isaiah 53:1–12

Jesus characterized the role of the Jews in God's dispensational plan this way (when He was speaking to a Samaritan woman):

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. — John 4:21–22

Gee, that sounds to me that Jesus is predicting the soon arrival of the opportunity of the gentiles to be saved just like the Jews will be able to be.

If there is a verse in the Bible that literally claims that God 'favored' the Jews, then I'll admit to it. But I don't know where to find it. All I know is that God chose the Jews for His special purposes. And, by the way, those special purposes will not be over until Jesus comes back to the earth at the end of the Tribulation period, just before His Millennial Reign.

The Church and the state of Israel coexist today to perform parallel, but radically different, purposes. And yet both fulfill the long-term will of God. The Church is the means by which people of this time are to find salvation through the Gospel of Jesus. The state of Israel is the current link in the long chain by which God intends to restore the earth to His original purpose — some of the specifics about how this will be done is given in the Book of Revelation.

There is still the question of what 'God favored the Jews' means. If God is to be judged a racist for doing so, then we have to ask, Which race? So, which race are we talking about? The Jews alone? Is that technically a 'race', or do we have to include all semitic people to be a race? I don't know the answer to this question. However, for the sake of argument, I will grant that the Jews of the Old Testament times constituted an ethnic group.

Matt doesn't seem to appreciate the very scripture he referenced, when he referenced Jesus saying

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. — Matthew 15:24

The House of Israel was to God the Children of Israel. And guess who God saw Himself as in relation to them? Their Father! The expression, ‘The House of Israel’ sounds like a family to me, being the offspring of Israel, who was previously called Jacob.

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

— Malachi 1:6–8

So, you see that to God, the Jews were much more to God than merely an ethnic group designed to fulfill a purpose. They were also in some way His children. But God was never going to give the Jews a free pass to sin. As Paul put it:

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. — Romans 11:22

Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

— Mark 16:14–16

Christians often refer to this commandment from Jesus as the Great Commission. It obviously applies to both Jew and Gentile.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

— Matthew 28:19–20

Gee, that doesn’t sound to me like Jesus is treating the Gentiles any different concerning the Gospel than the Jews. But remember that the ministry Jesus had in person was at an end and the Church Age was about to begin in earnest. So, to claim that Jesus had intended His gospel only to be delivered to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel is a ‘twisting’ of the scriptures. In the process of time, it was meant to be delivered to all people. So, maybe Matt knew about these scriptures or maybe he didn’t. If he didn’t know these scriptures, maybe he owes Jon an apology for his condescending treatment of Jon as biblical ignoramus.

Let’s deal now direct with this accusation that Jesus was a racist because He was not interested in the salvation of the Gentiles? Let’s look at the verse Matt

referenced. In Matthew 15:24. To whom was He speaking? To a Canaanite woman. What did she want? For her daughter to be delivered of a devil. What did the scripture claim about the requested deliverance? That it was performed! Then how is this scripture support for Matt's claim?

Look, friends, there are two things going on here. First, Jesus put her to a test of faith, just like He required of most of the healings He performed on the Jews. So, there is no difference there. Second, Jesus used this situation as a 'teaching moment'. In other words, He was explaining to the world an aspect of His personal mission on earth prior to His death and resurrection. (I'll come back to this notion of a 'teaching moment'² because this wasn't the only one.)

I don't remember a case in which Jesus turned away a believing gentile, but He had to keep to the priorities that were given Him from the Father, and these were (roughly in order):

1. To be born of a virgin at the fullness of time.
2. To live sinlessly under the Law.
3. To be vetted of John the Baptist and tempted of the Devil in the wilderness.
4. To begin His ministry of preaching the Gospel and choosing and training his Apostles.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

— Isaiah 61:1–3

5. To teach all that the Father had given Him to teach. [John 5:19]
6. To preach the Gospel over all the cities of Israel.
7. To openly contest the infidelity of the leaders of Israel. [Psalms 2, Matthew 15:7–9]
8. To affirm that God is the God of both Jew and Gentile [Isaiah 56:7, Matthew 21:13].
9. To fulfill all prophecies concerning the Messiah's first appearance on earth [Luke 24:44].

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

²This is an accepted phrase that I did not make up myself. I'll let the reader look it up.

10. To be as a sheep before the shears at His trial. [Isaiah 53:7, Acts 8:32–40].
11. To teach His disciples all that His Father gave Him to say to them. [John 17:8]
12. To lay down His life and to take it up again. [John 17:8].

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

13. After Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, He went back to His disciples and further instructed them on matters pertaining to the Kingdom of God. At some point He had them wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come in force to them. Then He arose into the cloud to be received again into heaven, and now sits on the right hand of God the Father, and is currently the Head of the Church (which is still an active role!), that is, all the true Christians on earth at any moment.

Therefore, it was not the Father's will that Jesus all by Himself 'do it all' while he abode in the body He was born into. The point is that the Church was and still is to be the instrument by which the Gospel is preached to all peoples on earth with power of the Holy Spirit.

By the way, Jesus gave His disciples another teaching moment to clarify for them His true status among men. When the local tax collector politely asked Peter if his master pays taxes, Peter immediately replied that he did. When he went to get money to pay the tax, Jesus intercepted him and said,

... What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee. — Matthew 17:25–27

Jesus took advantage of other such teaching moments. That's what He did to Nicodemus to explain to him how that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, one must be 'born again'. [John 3:1–3]

Why did God set it up so that the Church would take over the Great Commission after Jesus ascended? I don't know. But He did. Jesus said that if He didn't return to heaven, the Holy Spirit (the Comforter) would not come in the manner needed for the abundant power the believer needs to live a holy and righteous life. [John 16:7] I don't know why. That's just the way God designed it.

So, since the foundation of the Church on the Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, has been in charge of preaching to Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles alike, but administered through His Church on earth.

The Apostle Paul said:

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. — Romans 10:12

The Apostle John, reporting to us his vision while he was on the Isle of Patmos, at the latter end of the First Century A.D., wrote

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.
— Revelation 7:9–10

Gee, I wonder if there might be any other scriptures that hint at the Gospel being preached to all nations and peoples?

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. — Genesis 22:18

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.
— Psalm 22:27-28

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. — Daniel 7:13–14

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. — Isaiah 49:68

And what about the New Testament?

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. — Galatians 3:26–29

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: — Ephesians 2:10-16

[I'll set the stage for this next one: Peter received a vision to go to Joppa to preach the gospel of the Kingdom to a Roman centurion Cornelius, a gentile, and his family.]

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; — Acts 10:34-37

Had enough?

One huge problem that I see in both Matt's arguments and Jon's arguments is that Christianity is much more than a source of good moral doctrines. It is also the power to live out these doctrines in real life.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. — Galatians 5:16

The Apostle Peter put it this way:

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

— 2 Peter 1:1-4

Point 2: Not even God can be a source of objective morality.

I'm going to start off to make the case that it's possible to consider the morality that God gave to humanity to be 'objective', but then I will show that the argument is less than clear and, in the end, irrelevant, because on Judgment Day, God won't care whether we made a great argument either for or against biblical morality being subjective or objective. All Jesus will care about is whether we lived according to His moral rules or not.

First, some foundation. The objective/subjective dichotomy was invented to distinguish between the recognition of objects and their characteristics that ostensibly exist independently of human interpretation and/or human sensory perception of those objects or their state of being or human opinions about qualities of objective things. I stress that this dichotomy is meant to distinguish the between concepts of objects from the interpretations given to them by subjects, that is, by people, and only by people. The subjects were never intended to include all possible sentient beings, which would include angels, demons, spirits, and possible deities or gods.

One could, therefore, argue that the morals of God could are not 'objective' by mere definition. By this definition, God could not be classified as being in the set of subjects. However, one could generalize the definition to include all possible spirits, demons, angels, deities, and gods. But I wouldn't do this because the objective/subjective dichotomy is just applying words that aren't needed in Christianity. God's morals are not 'objective' because they come from God. Instead, they are **godly** because they come from God. You either believe that or you don't. You can't be logically argued into believing it. True morality is convincing to us only if we admit to our intuition of it, not because any set of rules is supposed to embody it.

What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we
cannot talk about we must pass over in silence.

— Ludwig Wittgenstein

If God isn't the source of 'objective' morality, than neither is man. We have thermometers to tell us the objective temperature of something. We have voltmeters to tell us the voltage across two points of a circuit. But no one has come up with a measuring device that objectively reads the moral content of a human belief, concept, or behavior. That leaves us just with human opinion. And if that's true, how do we decide that one person's opinion of morality is to be preferred over someone else's opinion of morality? Ultimately, we have to decide that question for ourselves. If you think about it, atheism is a great dodge to having to consider one's own moral accountability before a holy God, or even before other people. One can always keep one's conscience clear by just believing that there are no moral rules to follow. Just add to that a belief in determinism and the lack of free will and you can forget about being in sin or in any other state of moral culpability. Anyway, let's return to this objective-subjective dichotomy.

Let's consider an example: A psychologist is performing an experiment on three subjects (i.e., three people). She has set up a large room with a fixed amount of overhead lighting. There is a single piece of furniture in the room, which is a desk and chair with a pamphlet on it. There is an LED display on the wall which displays numbers on it, the purpose of those numbers was not explained to the subjects of the experiment. The contents of the pamphlet is a short story that the participant is to read and then answer a few 'comprehension questions'. But the real point of the experiment is for the participants to answer the questions on the last page.

The first subject enters the room with the instructions to sit at the desk and read the short pamphlet on the desk. Then the subject is instructed to answer all the questions in the back of the pamphlet, which concerns the physical environment of the room. The questions are:

- 1) Was the desk comfortable? (Yes or no?)
- 2) Was the lighting in the room: A. Adequate, B. Too bright, C. Inadequate? (circle only one).
- 3) Record the number in the LED display on the wall: _____.
- 4) When finished, hand the pamphlet to the assistant upon leaving the room.

After this participant finished the experiment, he exited the room and handed the pamphlet to the assistant. Then he was dismissed and asked to leave the building. After that, two other subjects were examined the exact same way, one at a time. For the sake of argument, these were the results:

One said the lighting was *adequate*, another said it was *too bright*, and the last one said it was *inadequate*. They all recorded the LED numbers as 106.5. This number, on which they found agreement, was a scientific measure of the brightness of the room in the region near the desk, as determined by a scientific photometer, which was placed near the desk, but its reading was carried by a line to the LED on the wall. None of the participants knew what the LED number signified.

A natural question to ask here is this: Is the photometer the right way to characterize the luminosity³ of the room, or is the subjective opinions of the people the right way? Answer: The question as posed cannot not be answered because the objectivity of the photometer and the subjectivity of the participants's opinions **serve different purposes**.

The point is that we trust to science to give us instruments that any trained person can use to get measurements that are independent of the trained person who makes the measurement (to within a certain accuracy, of course). Without knowing it, all three participants agreed what the luminosity of their local environment was, but they all disagreed on whether they found the lighting adequate to their reading needs.

It is a fundamental dogma of science that people are able to design and implement suitable measuring devices that will accurately measure a sufficient

³I'm using this term rather imprecisely. The measurement of light brightness has subtle complications to it that are irrelevant to this discussion.

number of theoretical variables for scientific experiments so that scientific theories can be tested experimentally. In our thought experiment, all three participants sat under the same luminosity, yet they all disagreed with each other whether the lighting was adequate for them or not.

So, Matt doesn't seem to believe that morality has an objective existence. He didn't seem reticent to bully Jon into believing that this view is correct, when he must surely know that atheists argue the existence of objective morality among themselves. Anything whose existence depends on human opinion cannot be 'objective' within the meaning given above.

Let's clarify. We can look into the world and see stars and birds and trees. These things exist to us objectively. Furthermore, we can invent scientific instruments that allow us to measure objective properties of these things, such as color spectrums, weights, heights, speeds, etc. But no one can look around him or herself and spot a glob of morality lying around. And there exists no scientific instrument that we can devise that can be used to measure the relative morality of a glob of morality, if it did exist. True morality is at best an intuition. As a Christian, I believe that the intuition of morality comes to each of us from God and is seated in our consciences.

The following are my choices for the four main notions of morality that humans experience:

1. Morality imposed externally by 'law' of one form or another (through government, schools, family, organizations, etc).
2. Morality imposed by intuition through our conscience.
3. Morality accepted by free will from religious or philosophical doctrines.
4. Morality arrived ad hoc by situation ethics.

If morality has no absolute foundation at all, then it's necessarily relative. And if it's relative, how do we know how to determine it as a guide for a society? Even worse, most atheists I've listened to or read have decried the existence of **free will**. But without free will, morality is meaningless. Morality is meaningless without the ability to make real choices in our behavior. But if we have no free will, we cannot make choices. Whatever we do is only what we had to do, and nothing else. Without free will, a person is just the biological equivalent of an automaton. We are like mindless rocks rolling down a hillside, being bounced to and fro by all the external forces being applied to it as it goes. I don't live my life that way, and I don't believe that any atheist who claims not to believe in free will and moral accountability really lives his or her life that way.

So where does our intuition of morality come from? I can only present my opinion on it: The intuition or feeling of morality comes from the conscience which is given by God to all normally functioning human beings. The bible claims that the conscience (our moral compass) can be seared, which means dulled, so that people don't experience a bad conscience anymore. See Romans 2:15 and 1 Timothy 4:1-2.

Now we can look at Matt's claim that morality is subjective. I claim that this is Matt's own view because Matt does not deny it while at the same time he led Jon into the conclusion.

Here's the thing. What makes you think that if there's a God, that gives an objective standard of right and wrong? Because, isn't it just because of what God says is right and wrong? That would make it subjective, because God's a thinking agent in your view, right?

In the first place, Matt wasn't forthright to admit to Jon that even atheists argue among themselves whether morality is objective or subjective. It seems to me that Matt appears to speak for all atheist, so, if at any time he knows he isn't, perhaps he should just admit it to the caller. And if Jon is representative of the believers who call into that show, they tend to be rather ignorant about philosophical matters.

Let's now generalize our discussion of moral knowledge to a more general version of knowledge.

Here's a quote from the website

<https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto3/>

"Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis."

Oh really? What about the role of intuition in the rational thought processes? I don't know what humanists think about intuition, but they sure love to throw around that word "rational" like they alone own it. I consider myself a very rational person, but I don't disregard the supernatural or intuition. I assure you that humanists and atheists do not own rational thought. Truth in any form, no matter how strange it may appear, must be rational.

Consider the following proposition:

Proposition: As of right now, no more novel musical tunes will be invented by humans.

To me, this proposition is clearly false, but I can't prove that it is false. Yet, I consider it rational to believe that it's false and irrational, on humanist grounds, to refuse to stake a claim on its truth value.

If I, as a Christian, have to refuse to believe in intuition, to be a so-called Christian humanist, then I refuse to be a Christian humanist. If you refuse to follow your own intuition, then what will you do when following your intuition is the only thing that will someday rescue you from a possible fatal event in your future? Let me present an example out of my own life.

In the mid-1990's, I was driving home from work one afternoon, traveling at the posted speed limit of 45 mph in the right-hand lane. As I approached a

driveway connecting the road to a parking lot, I noticed that a car in the parking lot was approaching the street maybe a bit too fast, but I often think that of vehicles in similar situations. Though I had no visible reason to suspect that that car would not stop before entering the road, I had at that moment in my a once-in-a-lifetime premonition that the car was not going to stop as it should have, and so it would enter my lane just before I reached that driveway, resulting in our two cars colliding with possibly fatal consequences for all concerned.

If I were going to act at all on that premonition, I had to do so immediately. So I did! I quickly moved into the lane to my left and immediately that car did indeed move into the right lane that I had just left. If I had not moved when I did, there would have been a nasty accident.

Perhaps you'd like to know how that premonition manifested itself to me. Was it a sudden vision? A voice I heard? It was neither of those. It was just a very strong feeling. I don't know how to describe it better than that. It was an intuitive feeling of a future event. That's not even supposed to be possible in the "rational" world of the atheist. I do not consider myself to be a machine capable of foreseeing the future. What I was when I received that intuition was a sentient being who received information about the future from a being that sits outside of time as we humans know it. Since I'm a Christian, I call that being God.

Premonitions, huh? I guess to some people they're spooky, supernatural. I don't have any personal problem with the existence of the supernatural. And in my lifetime, I have seen the supernatural grow and grow and manifest itself all over the world in plain public view. One recent example is the rise of Missing 411 cases.

My comments to Matt's debating techniques

In my opinion, very soon into Jon's statement of the problem he saw about the society he lives in, Matt knew that he was dealing with a rather naive Christian, on whom he decided to employ his 'tried and true' debunking techniques to quickly parry Jon's questions and counterclaims and then lead him to accept Matt's version of Humanism. Before Matt finessed the caller to 'accept' his version of humanism, he should have done a much better job at explaining to Jon what humanism really is. This would be needful even if there was only one version of humanism. But there isn't. I did a search on the Internet and found out that there are many descriptions of humanism, even something referred to as 'Christian Humanism'.

When Jon said:

And here's the result that we see: Racism abounds. People are deciding what gender they are. People are being treated unfairly. And our freedoms are being taken away by both the Biden administration and the ????? administration. We're in a state of chaos. **Do you agree, gentlemen?**

Matt replied:

No, not in the slightest.

Well, Matt, you seem to have assigned zero amount of problem in the areas that Jon has suggested. I wasn't aware that the modern atheist is now wearing rose-colored glasses. I can think of a few well-known atheists who believe that the world is in a heap of moral chaos, and they tend to blame religious people for that, especially Christians, and in particular Young-Earth Creationists: Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, Bill Nye, to name a few.

Apparently Jon thought that Matt didn't ever give him a sincere reply to his inquiry, so he asked it again but still didn't receive a direct and honest reply.

Well, I'll tell you, folks, I think we are in deep moral and political chaos, and I'm a registered Democrat! I also think that things are going to get a lot worse. If feminists get their way, all public restrooms will have to be legally gender neutral. I would call that chaotic for many possible negative side effects when that finally happens. I quite despise the current extremism on both the political Left and the political Right.

This is how I think Matt should have responded to Jon's question:

Of course I agree that the world and my country is in a mess, Jon. I just don't agree with you that your approach to fix these problems is the better way to go. I'd like to suggest to you that humanism is the better way to address these issues, including racism.

And then Matt should have explained to Jon what he thinks 'humanism' stands for before pressuring him to agree with him. (There is a name we give to the technique of trying to persuade an under-informed person to agree with us before we give them enough honest information to make an informed consent.)

So, does Matt consistently hold to this claim that all is hunky-dory in the world? No. He later admits that there is this thing called **racism** that does need to be addressed. Well, Matt can't have it both ways. He can't claim that there isn't the 'slightest' problem with racism in the country and then claim that the way to solve the racism problem in the country is to begin with a foundation of humanism.

I looked on the following Humanist website for the definition of humanism,

<https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/definition-of-humanism/>

As there are many different definitions of humanism on that page, I will attempt to reduce it all to one simple statement:

Humanism cares about the welfare of the human condition without regard to any god or gods.

This definition seems less like being neutral to theism and more like being antithetical to it. And if it's antithetical to theism, I argue that it is also antithetical to theists, as well.

Humanism is just another form of social morality. But how do atheists justify the existence of morality. It can't be prove to exist by scientific means. Humanists want to sell us on their way of moralizing without them even having a basis to believe in the existence of morality. If they appeal to intuition for its existence, how do they justify the existence of intuition? How is it that a human beings, being in their eyes, just a big bags of chemicals can explain how that morality is some kind of epiphenomena of chemical interactions? They certainly can't prove that, and if not by that, then by what?

But I, as a Christian, have an easy basis to believe in morality as a real thing: God gave each of us a conscience and by that we have the intuition of right and wrong. Done.

4 Conclusion

I said that I am not a Christian apologist and I hold to that, in spite of the fact that Wikipedia defines a Christian apologist as one who defends Christianity against objections. Of course I defend Christianity against objections. I have done so in this essay. But it's not my primary ministry. My primary ministries are to preach salvation in the name of Jesus, to preach lust deliverance in the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16), and to look for the possible modern-day fulfillments of the scripture that Jesus gave us:

Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things
which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be
shaken. — Luke 21:26

My other reason for not wanting to be thought of as a Christian apologist is because of the perception I have that that moniker should go to those Christians who debate Christianity in front of audiences. That is an activity that I'm not willing to do at this time. My own experiences with debating has left me disgusted and disillusioned with it. But that's just my personal feelings about it. However, I do not claim that there is no ministry of Christian apologetics. After all, the Apostle Paul was certainly a staunch defender of the faith, and he did so quite publically over the majority of his ministry.

So, unless and until the Lord changes my ministry, I'll stick to my Christian speculative fiction writing and Christian essays.